



Vancouver City Council Briefing

Consumer Fireworks Update February 26, 2013





Council Motion

“BE IT RESOLVED THAT Vancouver City Council instruct staff to explore and report back to City Council with recommendations for additional but limited periods of consumer fireworks sales and discharge similar to the current allowance in place for Halloween.”



Types of Fireworks

Definitions:

“Consumer Fireworks” (no certification required)

The fireworks that you can buy over the counter at corner stores at Halloween. Does not include “bangers, roman candles or firecrackers” which are illegal.

“Display Fireworks” (certification is required)

The professional fireworks used in big shows such as the Celebration of Lights. Requires certification administered by the Explosives Regulatory Division of Natural Resources Canada.



Illegal yet prevalent fireworks



Roman
Candles



Bottle
Rockets

Firecrackers



M80s



2013 Status

Over the past 12 years Council has taken several proactive steps to assist with managing negative impacts of fireworks related to Halloween.

Status in 2013:

Sales of consumer fireworks:

- allowed only during week prior to Halloween
- \$250 permit required for retailer
 - most are pop-up stores (in business for 1 week)

Use of consumer fireworks:

- must be 19 years or older
- requires permit
- permit must be shown at time of purchase
- permit must be available for inspection while using fireworks
- use allowed only on Halloween evening
- use restricted to private property with property owners' permission



Fireworks in other jurisdictions

Consumer Fireworks Banned	Consumer Fireworks Allowed
City of North Vancouver	Vancouver
Coquitlam	West Vancouver
Port Coquitlam	North Vancouver
Pitt Meadows	Port Moody
Maple Ridge	Burnaby
Richmond	Halifax
Delta	Montreal
Surrey	Toronto
Langley Township	Winnipeg
Mission	Saskatoon
Abbotsford	
New Westminister	
Langley City	
Victoria	
Calgary	

Edmonton and Brampton are planning restrictions.



City of Vancouver: Halloween Related Damage - VFRS

YEAR	FIRES	Est. COST OF DAMAGE
2006	56	\$150,000
2007	41	*\$1,300,000
2008	39	\$500,000
2009	22	\$50,000
2010	25	\$200,000
2011	37	\$453,000
2012	16	\$97,000

* includes transit bus destroyed
heavy rain Halloween evening



Vancouver School Board - 2010/11 Halloween damage



Trudeau Elementary -2010

Eric Hamber Annex – 2011
(\$410,000 damage)





Translink - Halloween 2007 damage





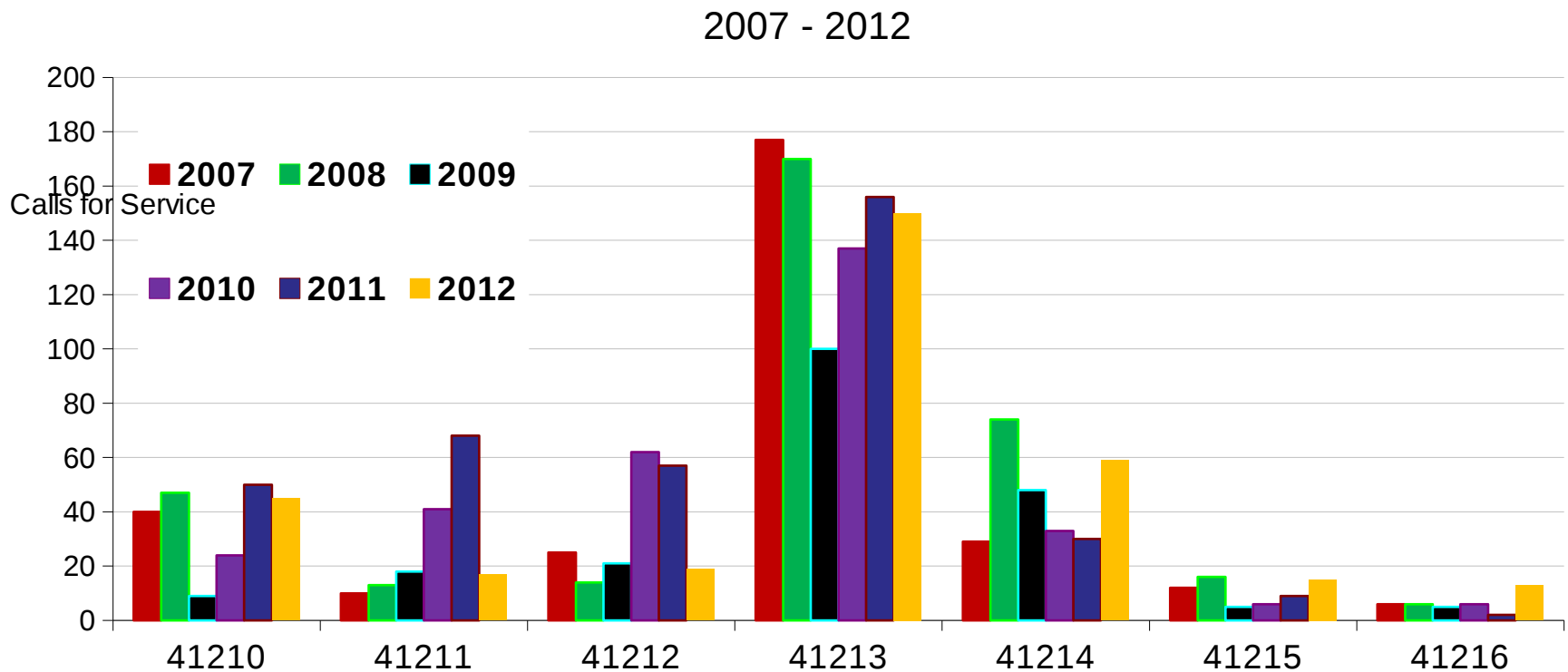
City of Vancouver – 2012 Halloween Residential Damage





Vancouver Police - Halloween Calls for Service

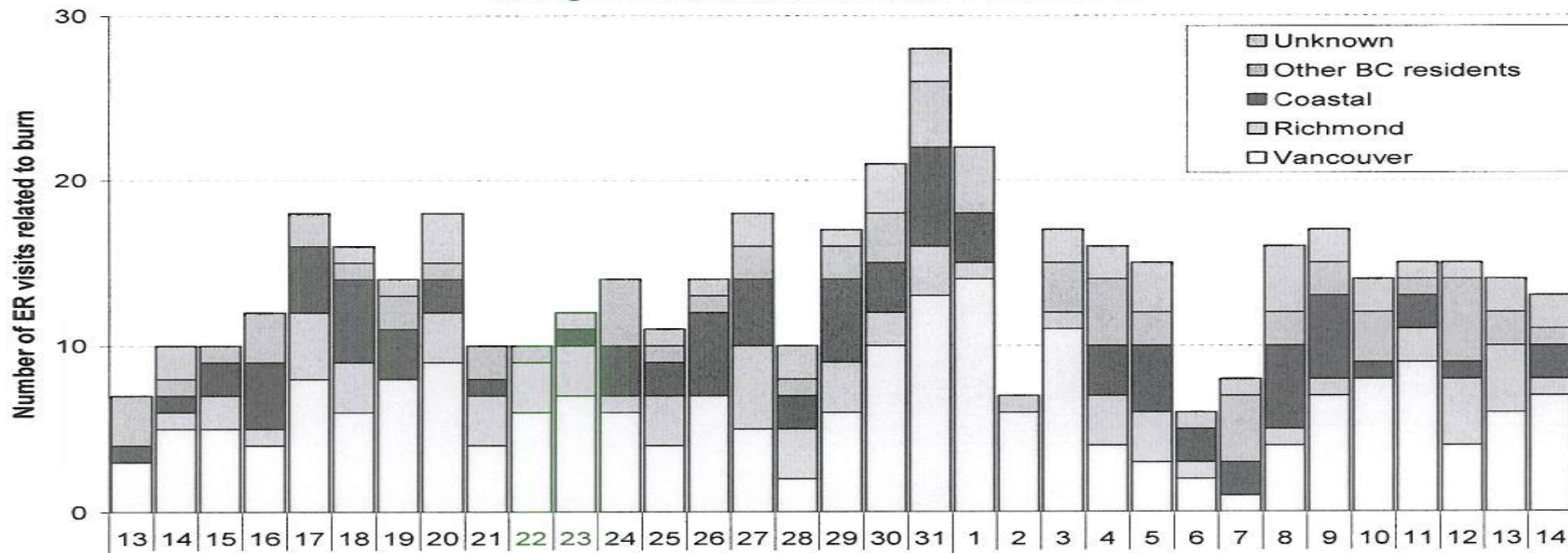
Average 309 VPD calls for Halloween related incidents each year





Vancouver Coastal Health: Halloween ER Visits - 2011

Figure 3. Number of VCH Emergency Room visits related to Burn by accident date of burn occurred during October 13 and November 14 of 2008-2011



- Significant increase in ER visits (amputations & burns)
- Majority of the victims aged 20 - 29 years
- Next largest group under 19 years



Other Concerns With Fireworks

- Continuing widespread irresponsible and unsafe use of fireworks
- Noise and air quality complaints
- Negative impacts on seniors, children, pets and wildlife
- Standard city residential lot is too small for safe firework use
- Easy access to illegal fireworks via black market and Washington State
- Difficult and hazardous to enforce rules and seize illegal fireworks



Summary of Evidence

- Current regulatory framework for fireworks in Vancouver does not adequately mitigate risk
- Expansion of consumer fireworks under the current framework would increase this challenge
- Other jurisdictions are further restricting or banning fireworks



City of Vancouver: Stakeholder Feedback on Consumer Fireworks

Vancouver Police Department and Vancouver Fire and Rescue

- *Support regulated community fireworks events during limited culturally-significant dates.*

Vancouver School Board

- *VSB is opposed to expanding the sale and use of fireworks.*

The Fire Chiefs' Association of B.C.

- *Recommends a ban or restricted use of fireworks.*

SPCA

- *Supports a ban, or restricted use of fireworks.*

Vancouver Coastal Health

- *Concerned over proposal to expand fireworks sales due to injuries, noise & air quality issues.*

Parks Senior Staff

- *Unauthorized use of fireworks in parks is an ongoing concern.*



Proposal

Staff propose an alternative, which encourages safe, community enjoyment of fireworks, in a family-friendly and controlled environment.



Proposal:

Periodic Consumer Use in a Managed Setting

1) Ban fireworks on private property and non-designated public property

Rationale: currently impossible to enforce safely; damage to health and property is well documented

2) Allow restricted community fireworks events on designated public property (such as Parks, Community Centers)

Rationale: can be managed safely with oversight by VFRS and Parks; allows neighborhood groups to enjoy these events

3) Allow permits for 5 evening events per year:

New Year's Eve

Halloween

One night during Chinese New Year (Feb.)

One night during Diwali (Nov.)

One night during Visaki (April)

Rationale: increase safe use of consumer fireworks during culturally significant events



Proposal:

Periodic Consumer Use in a Managed Setting

4) Proposed fireworks event plan reviewed, and permit issued by VFRS

Rationale: convenient, neighborhood locations, ensures informed review of fireworks plan; allows local fire hall to oversee from start to finish, builds community

5) VFRS and Fire Bylaw will continue to restrict sale of types of fireworks; control timelines for sale of fireworks; ensure safe and appropriate location for sale of fireworks

Rationale: ensure only safe consumer fireworks are being sold; prevent fireworks being stored over whole year; ensure fireworks are not being sold in or below residential occupancies or other high risk locations

Staff is reviewing possible insurance requirements for event organizers



Questions?

